

Fixings For A Feast

Yankton Community Feast Organizers Prepare For 2024 Meal, Seek More Local Support ... And Appetites

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Yankton's Community Holiday Feast needs you to make the annual event a success, according to organizers.

The Feast, which has become a Yankton holiday tradition, is scheduled for 4:30-7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 27, at Calvary Baptist Church, 2407 Broadway Avenue.

The free meal includes turkey, mashed potatoes, corn, cranberry dressing, rolls and pie, along with milk and coffee.

Though the meal is free to all, free-will donations will be accepted.

The first Community Holiday Feast was held approximately 28 years ago when friends Don "Murdo" Edwards and the late Steven "Chopper" Johnson decided to do something special in honor of their favorite holiday, Thanksgiving.

"Chopper, my husband, and Murdo decided they wanted to do something for the community, and they both like to eat, so they decided they were going to have this feast," Marlene Johnson, Community Feast organizer, told the Press & Dakotan. "So, we put the word out and we got everybody involved."

The Community Feast is about camaraderie and compassion within the community, she said.

"We want everybody to attend," Johnson said. "We want young people, old people, whoever can come. It



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

The annual Yankton Community Feast is on the holiday menu on Wednesday, Nov. 27 — the night before Thanksgiving. This free event has been a staple of the holiday season, but organizers have noticed a decline in attendance, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic — the event was not held in 2020 — and hope to bring the numbers back up this year.

Feast

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doesn't cost anybody a cent to come and have this meal and try to unify."

In a typical year, the Community Feast serves approximately 100 turkeys and 500 pounds of potatoes, with churches, businesses and organizations across town preparing the food, she said.

"Of those 100 turkeys, 32 turkeys with dressing are prepared and cooked by the nuns at Sacred Heart Monastery. The sisters have done those at the convent every year since we started this event," Johnson said. "We have Hy-Vee make 35 of our turkeys with dressing, the Yankton Fire Department makes 10 and then the rest of them are done by individuals."

Even the venue, Calvary Baptist Church, which offers seating for 600 diners at a time, is generously donated, along with space to store supplies the rest of the year, she said.

However, since the event took a year off during the COVID-19 pandemic, attendance has slumped, she said.

"At our high, we probably served, counting the deliveries, about 2,500 people," Johnson said. "The first year, we served 1,000 people and last year we had less than we started with."

The event also delivers meals to shut-ins and people who cannot attend, she said.

"We encourage them to come and eat because they're missing

the fellowship with everybody," Johnson said. "At our high, we were delivering 250 meals. I think last year we were under 200."

There are several possible reasons for the decline in interest that organizers have considered, she said.

"Older people came because they wanted the camaraderie," Johnson said. "They would sit and drink coffee and talk and giggle."

Most of those individuals are no longer with us, and those that were middle aged are now older and the younger people are not replacing those who passed away, she said.

To address that issue this

year, organizers asked the Yankton School District to notify its families about the Community Feast. Also, Connecting Cultures translated the event flier into Spanish so, versions in both languages could be posted at businesses all over town, she said.

"And there are still people that have the misnomer that this event is for the poor," Johnson said. "It is not. It is for every single person, and you meet the nicest people. We're all on the same playing field. We want everybody to be there."

Residents are encouraged to volunteer, donate and show up to enjoy the meal.

To donate turkey and dressing, desserts, cash or to volunteer, call Donna Madson at 605-760-3170. Volunteers are still needed to prepare and donate desserts, including pies, bars and cookies.

To arrange for delivery for shut-ins only, contact Donna at 605-760-3170 by Friday, Nov. 22.

Donations for the feast are also being accepted at the Elkhorn Valley Bank, at 114 Douglas Avenue in Yankton, or contact Johnson at 605-661-0433 to arrange for a donation.

IN REMEMBRANCE

<p>Paula Bruce 3:00 PM, Saturday Wintz & Ray Funeral Home Yankton</p>	<p>Harold Edward Eickhoff 10:30 AM, Saturday St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Fordyce</p>
<p>Cynthia "Cindy" Pinkelman 10:30 AM, Saturday Wintz & Ray Funeral Home Yankton</p>	

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Thank You

IN LOVING MEMORY The Ken Remington family wish to

Event Central
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tickets available at
cinemamagicyankton.com

Thursday

Wicked (PG)
2:00pm, 6:00pm

Gladiator II (R)
2:00pm, 7:00pm

Red One (PG-13)
1:00pm, 4:00pm, 7:05pm

Best Christmas Pageant Ever (PG)
11:55pm, 3:45pm, 6:30pm

Conclave (PG)
1:15pm, 4:00pm, 7:10pm

Friday - Saturday

Wicked (PG)
12:45pm, 3:10pm, 6:35pm, 9:00pm

Gladiator II (R)
12:45pm, 3:35pm, 6:35pm, 9:00pm

Red One (PG-13)
12:45pm, 3:25pm, 6:50pm, 9:35pm

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